# May First/People Link Statement for the AMC 2009 Conference

We have all gathered because we believe in alternative media, its power and potential and its importance in the struggles of our peoples for a better world. We are convinced that it is not only better, more complete and more accurate than mainstream media but that the role it plays, the way it is developed and delivered and the access people have to developing and delivering it make it completely different from mainstream media.

And we are here to protect and enhance that difference.

But protecting that difference goes wider than the content of the media itself. As the potential for collaborative work and greater demands for alternative distribution broaden, we are finding ourselves face to face with an enormous challenge and a politically critical decision.

Like all work, alternative media contributes to and supports the work of others. The media produced by people here advances the software, websites and systems constructed to distribute it. And it is there that a choice is made.

Most of our community is reliant on proprietary distribution systems - YouTube, Google and others - that are owned by large companies whose goal is to control communications as a market and to control expression as a product much the same way the mainstream media sells eyeballs to advertisers. With these systems, we give up some of our rights to our own media and we also support systems that aren't open, that are controlled by companies and that can and frequently do engage in censorship and content control without our consent.

There is nothing more poisonous than this situation and there is an alternative.

Activists from all around the world are developing free and open source software, patent-free audio and video formats, and media distribution systems that use these free tools and formats to build a commercial-free, open infrastructure for alternative media. These developments are at a critical stage and need the full support of media makers, techies, and political organizers. With this support, *we can truly be the media*.

## What Can I do?

- If you are not already using Firefox for your web browser, **download Firefox and start using it** (http://spreadfirefox.com). Firefox is free software and supports free file formats.
- If you are a video, audio, or visual producer and you are not already publishing your digital content in free formats, s**tart using free formats now**. The ogg format is one such format for video and audio. And the png format can be used for images. If you are worried that people won't be able to use the free formats, continue publishing in your non-free formats as well.
- If you are hosting with a corporate provider, **switch to progressive hosting provider**. There are plenty around the world. If you are not sure how to find one, ask around or email info@mayfirst.org. Remember: every time you email a link to a commercial provider you are sending an embedded advertisement for that provider.
- **Join the movement**. Join May First/People Link, the activist, membership-based Internet provider (http://mayfirst.org). Join the Transmission Network to build a free and open video distribution system (http://transmission.cc). Join the Information, Communications and Technology Committee of the US Social Forum to help build media tools for an active campaign (http://ict.ussf2010.org).